

NEWS Committee on Resources

U.S. Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), Chairman

U.S. House of Representatives - Website address: <http://www.house.gov/resources>

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House Subcommittee Considers New Commemorative Honoring Vietnam Veterans

Washington, D.C. - Bipartisan legislation to provide for the placement of a commemorative plaque inside the boundaries of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to honor those veterans who died as a direct result of war injuries after their service was the subject of a House Resources Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands hearing today.

The legislation - **H.R. 3293** - was introduced by **U.S. Rep. Elton Gallegly (R-CA)**, and currently has 219 bipartisan cosponsors. The Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, AMVETS, Vietnam Women's Memorial, Inc., and The Agent Orange Widows Awareness Coalition are some of the organizations that support the plaque's concept.

However, the bill is opposed by the Clinton Administration.

During the hearing, Gallegly explained that the bill would create a three-foot by three-foot plaque to be placed on the 13-acre site of the Vietnam Memorial. The plaque will not be placed on the wall or directly in front of the wall and no public funds will go toward the plaque.

Vietnam Veterans of America Testify In Support of the Plaque

"Vietnam Veterans of America opposes anything that would detract or diminish the power of the Wall," said **Ed Croucher, Executive Director of Vietnam Veterans of America**. "The In Memory Memorial as proposed is intended to be unobtrusive and can be located on the thirteen acre plot in such a way to not interfere with the Wall . . . I am sure you will agree now that it does not detract or diminish the impact of the Wall in any way. Just the opposite is true - it adds a dimension that was missing."

Retired Lt. Colonel & Brother Agent Orange Victim Testifies In Favor Of Bill

"In honoring all those who died of Vietnam war-related causes, in the end it is immaterial whether death came from enemy fire or Agent Orange-related cancer or post-traumatic stress disorder-related suicide," said **Lieutenant Colonel James G. Zumwalt II, USMCR (RET)**, the brother of a Vietnam veteran who died of cancers linked to Agent Orange. "Those veterans who served in Vietnam, who suffered a combat-related wound in battle and who died as a direct result of that wound after returning home are just as deserving of recognition for their sacrifice as are those who actually died in Vietnam."

Plaque Would Add To The Emotion and Healing Power of the Wall

“I have heard arguments that the placement of this plaque would somehow take away from the majestic and awe inspiring appearance of the Wall,” said James **Michael Fluck, Advisory Board Member for the Vietnam War in Memory Memorial Inc.** project. “I feel that this plaque would only add to the emotion and healing power of the Wall. I can not speak for the other 58,000 plus families who are connected to those names etched in granite but I can speak for mine who is connected to my uncle Harold Zook who died in a plane crash in 1966 in Vietnam. I do not think that he or his memory would be in any way tarnished by including the sacrifice of those who died in Vietnam but just did not know it until several years later.”

Clinton-Gore Administration Opposes Plaque

John Parsons, Associate Director of Lands, Resources, and Planning for the National Capitol Region of the National Park Service, said the Department of Interior opposes placing the plaque within the boundaries of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

For more information, please check the House Committee on Resources Home Page at <http://www.house.gov/resources/>

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